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STRIVE, A NATIONAL LEADER IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EXPANDS OPERATIONS TO ATLANTA

Experienced Nonprofit Leader Jomal Vailes Named As Founding Executive Director

New York, NY: January 22, 2020—STRIVE, the nation's leading workforce



development solution for individuals facing the biggest obstacles to employment, announced today that it will expand operations, opening its STRIVE Atlanta site in fall 2020. This will be STRIVE's most significant strategic expansion in its 35-year history, leading to more individuals securing better jobs, better wages, and better futures for their families. STRIVE Atlanta is the first ever STRIVE-operated site outside of NYC, building the foundation for future replication.

STRIVE also announced the appointment of Atlanta nonprofit executive **Jomal Vailes** as its founding Executive Director who will work to build on the success of its New York model to create new pathways of economic opportunity and mobility for Atlanta residents.

"STRIVE is grateful for the warm embrace we've received from local Atlanta leaders and the enthusiasm to partner together in launching STRIVE Atlanta," says STRIVE President & CEO Phil Weinberg. "The population we serve are often left out of economic opportunities that help them move out of poverty. They are deserving of a national plan to support their work toward the American Dream. STRIVE is proud to be partnering with local Atlanta leaders in this important effort, and we are thrilled to have such an exceptional leader in Jomal Vailes to head-up this effort with our critical partners at his side."

"While Atlanta is experiencing record growth in industry and economy, there is no greater obligation than to ensure its residents have access, training, and connection to employment," says Executive Director, STRIVE Atlanta, Jomal Vailes. "STRIVE Atlanta will help fulfill that promise, providing opportunities for those whose zip codes have traditionally served as a life-sentence. I look forward to engaging national and local philanthropy to help us make STRIVE Atlanta a reality by fall 2020."

Atlanta is well-documented for its significant income inequality and remains the lowest among major US cities in terms of upward mobility for those in poverty. According to the

U.S. Census as of July 2018, the city's population grew to 498,000, ranking first with a poverty rate of 24 percent, where one of every four individuals is affected.

"The importance of having a skilled and ready workforce is critical to Atlanta's growth," says Alicia Philipp, President of the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta. "With an expanding need for more skilled workers in healthcare, construction, hospitality and logistics industries, and others to come, the STRIVE Atlanta model is well-positioned to take on this critical challenge. We are pleased that STRIVE has appointed such a local leader in Jomal Vailes as its founding Executive Director and look forward to hearing more as plans evolve for the fall 2020 launch."

A Steering Committee comprised of workforce development and corporate leaders, philanthropy, and key stakeholders assessed the need and feasibility for a STRIVE expansion, resulting in the plan to create STRIVE Atlanta, and to focus on high-quality career pathways in industries with high demands for skilled talent and the opportunity to advance in a career. The program is expected to launch its inaugural class this fall.

Grounded in the latest research and evidence, the signature STRIVE Career Path program is comprised of a proprietary, newly codified five-pillar model beginning with an all-encompassing job readiness curriculum, STRIVE START (or Success Through Attitude & Readiness Training). STRIVE START is delivered through a work-simulated environment focused on attitude, personal responsibility, workplace ethics, professional etiquette, as well as interpersonal skills.

Students receive occupational skills training in one of several career paths aligned with local demand and employer needs and earn one or more industry-recognized credentials. Continued career coaching provides intense, personal attention to identify and remove obstacles to workplace success. STRIVE's job placement assistance builds on partnerships with local employers, securing jobs that match students' interests, skills, and career paths.

"We stand ready to partner with STRIVE Atlanta, and we couldn't be more excited by STRIVE's selection of Jomal to lead the effort," says John Helton, Executive Director of Atlanta CareerRise, a regional funder collaborative. "Serving on the steering committee over the last year has afforded us keen insight to the STRIVE difference, and its commitment to identifying opportunities that align with the critical employment needs of the region."

About Jomal Vailes

Before his appointment as Executive Director of STRIVE Atlanta, Jomal served as Chief Philanthropy Officer for Communities In Schools of Georgia, where he worked closely with its President and Board of Directors leading the statewide agency's resource development strategies focused on expanding philanthropic investments and agency visibility. He previously served as Chief External Affairs Officer for The Center for Working Families (Annie E. Casey Foundation, Atlanta Civic Site), overseeing fund

development, communications and strategic partnerships as part of its Family Economic Success and Two-Generation portfolios.

Jomal has held roles in the nonprofit sector as Manager of Corporate and Foundation Relations for Georgia Aquarium, and Manager of Community Engagement and Diversity Programs for the world-renowned Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. Jomal is a Certified Fund Raising Executive and is currently a candidate for the MA in Philanthropy from LaGrange College. He holds a BS in Organizational Leadership from Valdosta State University after matriculation at Morehouse College. Jomal is married to his college sweetheart, Shameika and they have three daughters.

About STRIVE

STRIVE (www.strive.org) is a national leading workforce development solution for people who face the biggest obstacles for employment. Their proven model propels students into careers that lead to upward mobility and define the promise of the American Dream. Headquartered in East Harlem, New York, and since its founding in 1984, STRIVE has helped more than 75,000 graduates prepare for career success through employment programs geared toward those left behind in the economy, including adults, young adults, and those with a history in the justice system.

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